

CHAPTER ONE (1)

GSP

GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAMME
NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT & ECONOMIC



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENTS OF
ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES (NASELS 2021)**

BAUCHI STATE UNIVERSITY, GADAU CHAPTER

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NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

THE GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAMME AND ITS RELEVANCE

The General Studies Programme is designed to enable a university student know something about the areas of knowledge that his normal university programme may not touch at all. Thus, the Course on the Nigerian Government and Economy is designed for students whose programmes concentrate on aspects of knowledge that has nothing to do directly with the politics and economics development of Nigeria. Such students in this University include those in the Faculty of Science, Technology, Medicine and other Science-based programmes. Those studying some liberal Arts, Law and Languages are also included because of their limited or on exposure to politic and the economy of the country through their normal programme.

Thus, the primary aim of the General Studies Programme, including this course, is to produce a broad-based educated person who has a working knowledge of many field of endeavor besides his/her area of specialization. Such an educated person is able to deal with the moral, political, economic, cultural, technological and other issues that confront his/her society, and is capable of making appropriate value

judgments concerning these issues. In particular, the course on the Nigerian Government and Economy is designed to enable graduates of this university, who would otherwise have been ignorant of the governance and economic development of the country. Be well informed about these aspects as well as to realize how these aspects relate to his/her own economic, social and political pursuits. This is where the relevance of the course lies. This is why going through the course, and indeed the General Studies Programme, is more than scoring marks towards earning degree.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LECTURE NOTES

This booklet on the Nigerian Government and Economy is prompted by a number of reasons. The first reason for its production is to provide reading material in one small volume on the various aspects of the course that are otherwise scattered in many books and articles. Secondly, the material is being presented in a very simple language and the content is appropriately pitched at the level the target students can easily understand. Thus, the main objectives may be summarized as follows:

- a. To save the affected students the time they would have spent in searching through numerous books that would have been needed to gather materials for the course, when such books are available;
- b. To remove the frustration the students would have faced where the appropriate books are not available;

- c. To present the subject matter in a very simple language, avoiding the use of difficult concepts and terms that would have been encountered in subject-matter textbooks; and
- d. To save the students a lot of money they would have needed to buy, or access in any form, the required texts.

THE CONTENT

The content of the booklet is based on the approved course syllabus on Nigerian Government and Economy for the Bayero University, Kano, reproduced earlier. However, to achieve the objectives outlined above, the content of the syllabus is formatted into nine chapters (that is, Chapters 2 - 10 of the booklet).

The content is also arranged in a way to reflect the pre-colonial, and the post-colonial conditions in the country. Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 discuss issues in the political development of Nigeria, particularly in the post-colonial periods. The next four of the chapter (6, 7, 9 and 10) address economic issues in the three periods, while Chapter 8 deals with the post-colonial (that is, contemporary) Political Economy of the country. Chapter 1 (this chapter) is the introduction and Chapter 11 is the conclusion.

THE NIGERIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

Nigeria is located on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa with an area of 923,773 sq. km contained within latitudes 4° and 14° north of the Equator, and longitudes $2^{\circ} 20'$ and $14^{\circ} 30'$ east of the Greenwich Meridian. To the north of the country are the Republics of Niger (north) and Chad (northeast); and to the east, is the Republic of Cameroon. On the south side lies the Atlantic Ocean, while to the west and northwest is the Republic of Benin. It has a population, growing at about 2.8% per year, was about 88 million inhabitants in 1991. By the year 2000, the estimated population was well over 100 million, making it the 8th most population country in the world. Virtually every one out of the five Africans is a Nigerian. The country is characterized by the most productive tropical climates; humid tropical wet and dry. These produce five vegetation types; the swamp forest, the equatorial rain forest, the deciduous/Guinea Savanna, the Sudan Savanna, and a bit of the Sahel Savanna, in a south-north direction.

THE THREE PHASES OF NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY

the country, Nigeria, has got an interesting, even if complex political and economic history. The complex political-economic history of the area known today as Nigeria can be considered in three distinct periods of phases that are identified in this course as (1) pre-Colonial, (2) Colonial, and (3) post-Colonial otherwise known as independent Nigeria.

(1) THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD - THE TRADITIONAL SETTING

The area known as Nigeria today must have been inhabited several centuries ago. We are not very certain of the initial period. Similarly, Europeans are known to have visited the West African region in the fifteenth century A.D. and had reached Nigeria long time before the conquest of Lagos in 1860. Similarly, the Pre-Colonial Period in the northern parts of today's Nigeria is often considered under two distinct period: (a) the Pre-Islamic, and (b) the Islamic, including the Caliphate periods. The pre-Islamic period varied widely, depending on when Islam reached particular places. For examples, the pre-Islamic period can be assumed to be terminated in Kano by the conversion of Yaji to Islam in about 1350 A.D. (Smith, 1997). The pre-Islamic political arrangement and economic systems of the area went through basic changes during the Islamic, and particularly the Caliphate period.

However, it is convenient to terminate the pre-colonial period in 1860, since colonialism (but not British rule) started in earnest after the sacking of Lagos during the time *Oba Dosumu*. During this pre-colonial period, the area known as Nigeria today, consisted of several ethnic nations of different sizes, each with its own type of socioeconomic and political organizations. This ranged from the Sokoto Caliphate (with millions of inhabitants covering over 100,000 sq. km) through the empires of Benin, Oyo and Borno, the medium states and principalities to small

ethnic or clan societies south of the Plateau and East of the Niger (covering just few sq. km with a few hundreds of inhabitants).

Indeed, before the Fulani Jihad, the area later occupied by the Caliphate consisted of small nations like the other areas of the country, some controlled by Islamic precepts, other by different considerations. For example, in the pre-Caliphate Kano and other Hausa states, the position of women was very high in the political arrangement as the *Magajiya* and *Iya Inna* held the central positions next to the king. The political system itself was based on sacred kingship (Lange, 1999). However, such an important role for women in the government became gradually eroded under Islamization of the traditional culture, particularly during the Caliphate period.

In every part of the pre-Colonial Nigeria, the basic economic activity was agricultural with patterns of specialization dictated by ecology and culture other occupations were either seasonal, part-time or specialized, such as the crafts, arts and other manufacturing based on local skills and resources that were organized under guilds or the patronage of ruling machinery.

(2) THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The Colonial period is easier to define. It starts from the sacking of Lagos in 1860, or the following year and lasted until the time of independence on October 1, 1960, making a hundred years of colonial servitude. However, not all this time

was had under British rule. The larger part of Nigeria, besides Lagos, did not come under the British rule until much later. Some corporate bodies were the first to bring certain part of the country under their command. These include the Royal Niger Company and the United African Company, to mention but too. Under a protracted process of acquisition and change, the southern and northern protectorates came to be in 1899. British rule only covered all the areas known as Nigeria in 1903.

During colonial period, the colonialists brought basic changes to the politics and economy of the country now known as Nigeria. First, it created a Lagos Colony, a Southern Protectorates and a Northern Protectorates. New methods of administration were introduced to govern these territories. Secondly, under Governor Lugard, these areas brought together in 1914 (meaning Niger are) with a colonial administration set up, based essentially on a “*divide and rule*” strategy. Thirdly, the period also brought about a monetized economy in place of the earlier trade by barter with the introduction of head-taxes, payable with colonial money. Next, the period brought formal education, usually tagged the Three Rs (‘Rithmetic, Reading, ‘Riting) which took the young ones off the farm into the towns and cities where they sought white-collar jobs. Finally, the period brought party politics, destroying the traditional consensus system of decision-making, and providing rules and procedures rules and procedure of governance by an elected few representation the rest. Under that system, consensus gave way to the majority view in decision making.

(3) THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD, OR POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

This period started from October 1, 1960 when Nigeria became independent through October 1, 1963 when it became a republic up till now. The Independence Constitution, which recognized the Queen of England as the ultimate (even if ceremonial) head of Government, was used from October 1, 1960 to October 1, 1963. This was slightly amended to usher in the Republic status on October 1, 1963, with a ceremonial indigenous president. A federal setup was adopted, initially consisting of three regions (the Northern, Western and Eastern), but increased to four by Republican Constitution when the Mid-Western Region was created. The four regions were relatively autonomous. For example, each had its local police force side by side with the federal police force. Each pursued certain political, economic, and educational objectives found appropriate to their situation, as long as such pursued a system of free primary education. In general, the parliamentary system of government was adopted at both the federal and regional level. This democratic republican federal governance lasted until January 15, 1966 when the Army Majors struck, alleging a miss rule on the part of the civilians.

Perhaps the Majors had a point, because there was unrest in the West, where the coalition (known as United Progressive Grand Alliance, UG) between the Action Group (AG) and the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) was having a field

day, killing, burning and maiming suspected Yoruba members of the coalition between the Democratic Party of Nigeria and Northern People's Congress (NPC) known as the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). However, the execution of the Majors' uprising was biased against the NNA members in the Northern, Western and Mid-Western Regions. And this caused a great deal of disaffection in the country. In the end, it was not the Majors that staged the coup d'état that came to power. By some process of succession, General Agui Ironsi became the first Military Head of State a few days after the Majors' revolt. Since the Majors' strike on that day, it has been a din-don affairs between military and the civilian in a kind of musical chair power dance. Briefly, these are the independent regimes:

- October 1, 1960 - January 15, 1966 – Civilian, parliamentary under a ceremonial Governor-General/President with Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister - the first three years as a free country the Queen of England, and the last three as a federal republic – usually referred to as the First Republic;
- January 15, 1955 to July 29, 1966 - Military, under Major-General Agui Ironsi, plagued by the bias in the execution of the Majors' rise in favour of the Igbo;
- July 29, 1966 - July 29, 1975 – Military under Lt-Colonel Yakubu Gowon (later Major-General), a sort of

protest change with a compromise candidate, but a change that led a fiercely fought the Nigerian Civil War (1967 - 1970);

- July 29, 1975 - October 1, 1979 - Military, under General Murtala Ramat Mohammad (assassinated Feb. 13, 1976) and Obasanjo regime a corrective regime that was bent to dealing with the corruption in the country and stepped on powerful toes, leading to the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed.
- October 1, 1979 - December 31, 1983 - Civilian, Executive Presidency, under Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a regime wooed by the world power to take unnecessary loans, resulting in gross scarcity of essential commodities and grafted – usually referred to as the Second Republic;
- January 1, 1984 - August 27, 1985 - Military under General Muhammad Buhari, a corrective regime in the style of General Murtala, but one that was note for its draconian rules in the process of sanitizing the nation;
- August 27. 1985 - August 26, 1993 - Military, under General Ibrahim Babangida, a regime with, at best, selfish reasons and one that has caused the most damage to the Nigerian State by elevating corruption to the highest level;

- August 26, 1992 - November 17, 1993 - Mixed, under Chief E. Shonckan, a stop gap regime that is noted more for its inactivity and short span than for anything else - aborted Third Republic (?);
- November 17, 1993 - June 8, 1998 - Military, under General Sani Abacha, the worst regime for its terror, if not for its corruption and the only one to be terminated by a misadventure death of its leader;
- June 8, 1998 - May 8, 1999 - Military, under General Abdulsalami Abubakar, another stop-gap regime that tried its best to correct the poor image of the armed forces, one that arranged the quickest transition and the most hurried election in the history of the country; and
- May 29, 1999 - to date - Civilian, Executive Presidency, under Chief (General Rtd.) Olusegun Obasanjo, a regime that came in with high hopes, but bedeviled by the leftovers of the Abacha's regime and the misinterpretation of democracy by those who were gagged under the fearful regime - to be known as the Third Republic (?).